Health Disciplines Board

Annual Report

JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 1985

Alberta
HEALTH DISCIPLINES
BOARD

Alberta

Office of the Minister Responsible for
Professions and Occupations

425 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6 403/427-2468

April 1, 1986

The Honourable G. Amerongen
Speaker
Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Sir:

I have the honour to present the Annual Report of the Health Disciplines Board for the year January 1, 1985 to December 31, 1985.

Respectfully submitted,

Ian C. Reid
Minister Responsible for
Professions and Occupations

Alberta
SOLICITOR GENERAL
Professions and Occupations Bureau

9th Floor, John E. Brownlee Building, 10365 - 97 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 3W7

Our File No
Your File No

April 1, 1986

The Honourable Dr. Ian C. Reid
Minister Responsible for
Professions and Occupations

Sir:

I have the honour and privilege to present the Annual Report of the Health Disciplines Board for the year January 1, 1985 to December 31, 1985.

Respectfully submitted,

Elvin Christenson, F.C.A.
Chairman
Alberta Health Disciplines Board

CONTENTS

Chairman's Report 9

Introduction 10
- Health Disciplines Act
- Health Disciplines Board
- Health Discipline Committees and Associations
- Administration

Health Disciplines Board 11
- Membership
- Activities of the Board and its Committees
  - Evaluation of Disciplines Requesting Designation
  - Development of Regulations for Designated Disciplines
  - Registration of Practitioners
  - Education
  - Investigation of Complaints

Health Disciplines currently regulated under the Health Disciplines Act 14
- Emergency Medical Technicians
- Medical Radiation Technologists
- Respiratory Technologists

Health Disciplines designated to be regulated under the Health Disciplines Act 17
- Acupuncturists
- Nursing Assistants
- Rehabilitation Practitioners
- Combined Laboratory X-Ray Technicians
- Hearing Aid Practitioners

Health Disciplines under evaluation by the Health Disciplines Board 19

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman's Report

The year 1985 has been an exciting one for the Health Disciplines Board. On October 16, the government passed the first set of regulations under the Health Disciplines Act which represented a significant amount of the Board's past work. These regulations govern the disciplines of Emergency Medical Technicians, Medical Radiation Technologists and Respiratory Technologists. At this stage, the benefits of the Health Disciplines Act will reach the public. Today there are common educational qualifications, a defined scope of practice and standards of practice for practitioners in each of these three disciplines. Through this legislation, Albertans are protected by highly qualified personnel who provide health care services which meet acceptable standards.

With the approval of regulations, individuals who question the competency, practices or conduct of a registered member in one of these disciplines have the option to file a complaint. A straightforward administrative procedure is set out to handle such complaints and the appropriate remedial action against a registered member who contravenes the regulation may be taken. The Board recognizes the need for the public to be knowledgeable and informed in order that the legislation be truly effective. We are working towards this goal so that once regulations are enforced, the system will provide highly satisfactory services in medical radiation technology, emergency medical technology and respiratory technology.

In 1985, the Board was extensively involved in the preparation of regulations for the disciplines of Nursing Assistants, Rehabilitation Practitioners and Acupuncturists. Some complex and difficult issues have surfaced. Conflicting views exist among professional associations, government departments and experts in the disciplines with respect to the content of these regulations. It will be a major challenge for the Board to evaluate the concerns and interests of all parties and recommend regulations which will be equitable. As in the past, the Board will be guided by its mandate to protect the interest and well-being of Albertans.

I wish to express my appreciation to the members of the Board for their cooperation and effort during the past year. In particular, I would like to acknowledge two dedicated members, Dave Jones, Calgary and John Low, Ponoka, who retired from the Board this December after four years of service. On behalf of the Board and staff, I would also like to extend our gratitude to our Minister, the Honourable Dr. Ian Reid, for his support and encouragement in our endeavours.

We look forward to another productive and challenging year in 1986.

Elvin Christenson

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Health Disciplines Act

The Health Disciplines Act has been in effect since 1981. This legislation, originally entitled The Health Occupations Act, allows for the regulation of various health disciplines and is intended to avoid the proliferation of separate pieces of legislation.

This Act protects the public by regulating the practice of health disciplines which involve risk of harm to the public.

The Health Disciplines Act also protects practitioners of designated disciplines. Firstly, it gives individuals registered under the provisions of the Act the right to use titles and abbreviations reserved exclusively for them. Individuals who are not registered and use these titles may be prosecuted. Secondly, it protects practitioners from contravening other legislation. Health care practitioners who are not recognized under an act may be practising in violation of the Medical Profession Act and could be subject to prosecution. Although the Health Disciplines Act does not give practitioners an exclusive scope of practice, the services registered practitioners may provide are specified in the regulation. In this way, the practitioner, who is providing services in an accepted area of health care, is protected from contravening other legislation.

Although registration is not compulsory, it is advantageous for qualified personnel to identify themselves through this legally sanctioned means.

Health Disciplines Board

The Health Disciplines Board was established in January 1982 as a result of proclamation of the Health Disciplines Act. The Board is an advisory body of government whose function is to provide expertise and guidance in the regulation of health disciplines as set out in the Act.

This public body consists of nine members: two from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta; one from the Alberta Dental Association and six from the general public. All are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council for three year terms. One employee from each of the departments of Advanced Education, Hospitals and Medical Care, and Social Services and Community Health may attend meetings of the Board as observers.

Specifically, the Board has three functions:

- to evaluate and make recommendations regarding designation for health disciplines requesting regulation under the Health Disciplines Act;
- to recommend regulations which establish the scope of practice, educational qualifications, training programs, examinations, registration practices, reserved titles and standards of conduct for each of the designated health disciplines; and
- to act as an appeal body for decisions of the health discipline committees, with respect to registration and misconduct.

The Board reports to the Minister Responsible for Professions and Occupations, who is charged with the administration of the Health Disciplines Act. The Honourable Dr. Ian C. Reid held this responsibility during 1985.

Health Discipline Committees and Associations

Health disciplines which have been designated for regulation under the Health Disciplines Act are governed by a health discipline committee or a health discipline association. These bodies assist the Board in establishing regulations for the discipline, registering practitioners, and handling disciplinary matters.

To date, all disciplines designated under the Health Disciplines Act are governed by a committee rather than a health discipline association. Committees are made up of three to nine members, appointed by the Minister, the majority of whom are

practitioners of the health discipline. The remaining members are knowledgeable with respect to its practice.

As a result of a 1985 amendment to the Health Disciplines Act, a health discipline association may govern a designated discipline instead of a health discipline committee. Established associations, which represent a majority of the practitioners of the health discipline, may assume the responsibility of governing the discipline if the Board makes such a recommendation and it is approved by the Minister. Recommendations are based on such factors as the number of members in the association, the length of time the association has existed and its financial position.

A health discipline association appoints a registrar who has similar powers and duties to the Registrar of the Health Disciplines Board. It also establishes a registration committee and a conduct and competency committee which have the same powers and duties as a health discipline committee.

The specific functions of the health discipline committee or health discipline association are to advise the Board on:

- qualifications and training requirements for registration purposes;
- services that registered members may provide;
- applications for registration;
- standards of conduct or competency of registered practitioners.

In addition, these bodies are empowered to investigate complaints regarding conduct or competency.

Administration

The Health Disciplines Board and committees are assisted in their work by a Secretariat. The Secretariat consists of the Registrar of the Health Disciplines Board who is also Secretary to the Board, research assistants and other staff as required. The Registrar must establish and maintain a register for each designated health discipline. The register is a record of all registered practitioners, by name, address, employment address, date of original registration and other information specified in the regulations.

Health Disciplines Board

Membership

The members of the Health Disciplines Board for the year 1985 were:

Chairman Elvin Christenson, FCA, *Edmonton*
Deputy Chairman Marlys Carruthers, RN, *Calgary*
Members William Donald, MD, *Calgary*
Calvin Fairbanks, MD, *Calgary*
David Jones, LLB, *Calgary*
Lucille Lisowski, *Edmonton*
John Low, *Ponoka*
Murray Ross, *Edmonton*
John Young, DDS, *Edmonton*

Activities of the Board and its Committees

Evalution of Disciplines Requesting Designation

One of the primary functions of the Health Disciplines Board is to evaluate specific health disciplines to determine if the discipline should be regulated under the Health Disciplines Act. The Board conducts such an evaluation if a request has been made by or on behalf of an association of persons engaged in that health discipline, or if directed by the Minister.

In conducting these evaluations, information is collected from other associations concerned with the health discipline, employers, government departments and agencies, educational institutions and members of the public. Briefs, in the form of questionnaires are distributed as a means of soliciting data. Those submitting written briefs are also invited to present oral presentations to the Health Disciplines Board.

The Board seeks information on the following:

- the tasks and their complexity which are included in the practice of the health discipline;
- the degree of direction or supervision received by practitioners of the discipline;
- approved educational programs for the health discipline both in and outside of Alberta.

The Board must then evaluate the information collected with respect to:

- the degree of direct and personal impact that practitioners may have on the health of those for whom they care for or treat;
- the desirable qualifications with respect to education, training, specific knowledge or technical proficiency;
- the minimum standards of competency required of practitioners.

Upon completion of its study, the Board must decide if the potential for harm and degree of risk to the public from the practice of that health discipline warrants regulation under the Health Disciplines Act.

A full report and recommendation is made to the Minister. If accepted for designation, legislation is enacted naming the health discipline under the Act.

The Board must include in its recommendation whether the health discipline should be governed by a health discipline committee or a health discipline association.

To date, the following health disciplines have been designated under the Health Disciplines Act:

Emergency Medical Technicians
Medical Radiation Technologists
Respiratory Technologists
Acupuncturists
Nursing Assistants
Rehabilitation Practitioners
Combined Laboratory X-Ray Technicians
Hearing Aid Practitioners

During 1985, evaluations of the disciplines of therapeutic masseurs, mental deficiency nurses and dental technicians were conducted.

Development of Regulations for Designated Disciplines

Once a health discipline has been designated, a committee appointed or an association named, the development of regulations commences. Regulations are made concerning the following:

- scope of practice describing the specific services that can be provided and the conditions or limitations upon these services;
- titles and abbreviations reserved for registered practitioners;
- qualifications and eligibility requirements for registration;
- standards of conduct and competency;
- approved training programs for registration;
- examinations required for registration;
- registration matters such as registers, fees, forms, expiry dates, and renewals.

Since practitioners knowledgeable in the health discipline are members of the health discipline committee or association, it is these bodies that play a major role in establishing regulations. They are responsible for assisting the Board in drafting the regulations, and circulating them as widely as possible to those affected in order to obtain their comments. After consultation and revisions are complete, the regulation is presented to the Board for a final recommendation and then to the Lieutenant Governor in Council for approval. To allow time for a smooth transition, regulations generally come into effect on a date following proclamation.

During 1985, regulations were proclaimed for the following disciplines:

Emergency Medical Technicians;
Medical Radiation Technologists;
Respiratory Technologists.

The regulations are still in the developmental stage for:

Acupuncturists;
Nursing Assistants;
Rehabilitation Practitioners.
Combined Laboratory X-Ray Technicians;

Registration of Practitioners

After a regulation for a health discipline is proclaimed, registration of practitioners commences. Individuals are required to submit an application which details their educational qualifications, certification, examination results, professional registration, employment record and character references. Upon approval of the application, the practitioner's name, place of employment, registration number and date of registration are entered in the register for that discipline. These registers are open to the public during regular office hours. Each registered practitioner is issued a card which indicates his/her name, address, area of practice and registration expiry date. These cards serve as proof of registration for employers, patients and others.

Registrations must be renewed annually. Registration renewals are based on employment in the discipline and, in accordance with the regulations, on meeting continuing educational requirements. Applicants who do not meet the necessary requirements are referred to the health discipline committee or association for review and recommendation.

Registration for the three health disciplines with regulations - Emergency Medical Technicians, Medical Radiation Technologists and Respiratory Technologists - began in 1985.

Education

The proclamation of regulations and the effect of legislation on practitioners, employers, and the public have created a demand for public information. The Board has responded to this demand in various ways. There has been increased participation at seminars, conferences and meetings where discussion focussed on aspects of the legislation and work of the Board. An information pamphlet providing an overview of the work of the Health Disciplines Board was printed and distributed to interested parties. Information circulars explaining the effect of the newly proclaimed regulations have been distributed. The Board participated in the Alberta Hospital Association's annual convention in November and entered an exhibit. The purpose of the display was to describe to the delegates the work of the Board, with emphasis on the regulations for Emergency Medical Technicians, Medical Radiation Technologists and Respiratory Technologists. Over 4,000 individuals, representing Alberta's hospital administrators, boards and personnel, participated in this convention. This group is the major Alberta employer of practitioners currently regulated under the Act. The display is portable and will be used at appropriate future conferences in Alberta.

Investigation of Complaints

The Health Disciplines Act provides a procedure to file and hear a complaint against registered practitioners. Complaints may be made with respect to conduct, skill or judgement used in practice, fitness to practise, or unauthorized services. Complaints must be made in writing and directed to the appropriate committee. All information pertaining to the patient or client is kept confidential. The committee will review the complaint and hold a hearing, when necessary. If a complaint is upheld, the registered practitioner may be reprimanded, fined, suspended, struck from the register, or required to take specified training. The complainant or the practitioner may appeal decisions of the committee to the Health Disciplines Board. The Board's decision may in turn by appealed to the

Court of Queen's Bench. Since regulations for the disciplines of Emergency Medical Technicians, Medical Radiation Techno' gists and Respiratory Technologists do not come into force until 1986, no complaints have been received.

Health Disciplines currently regulated under the Health Disciplines Act

Emergency Medical Technicians

The designation of the discipline of Emergency Medical Technician - Paramedic received royal assent in June 1983, and a committee was established in January 1984. At a later date, the Health Disciplines Board conducted a review of the discipline of Emergency Medical Technician - Ambulance and recommended its inclusion under the Act as well. As a result, the original designation was amended to Emergency Medical Technicians and one health discipline committee was established with responsibility for both groups. In December 1984, the original committee was expanded to include practitioners in emergency medical technicians - ambulance. Members of the Emergency Medical Technicians Committee for 1985 were:

Dan Osborne, *Edmonton*, **Chairman**
Mary Ann Chernuka, *Edson*
William Coghill, *Edmonton*
Joe Heaton, *Medicine Hat*
Joyce Holt, *Redwater*
Daniel Reid, *Leduc*
Terry Sosnowski, MD, *Edmonton*
Richard White, *St. Albert*

Emergency medical technicians are pre-hospital care workers trained to provide life support services. The practitioner with an ambulance specialization is trained to give basic life support services; whereas the paramedic is also trained to administer advanced life support services under the direction of a physician. These practitioners are employed by approximately 100 ambulance operators in the province. In 1985, there were approximately 650 emergency medical technicians - ambulance and 250 emergency medical technicians - paramedic employed in Alberta. It is estimated that ambulance services responded to over 125,000 calls in 1985.

The professional association in Alberta for emergency medical technicians - ambulance is the Registered Emergency Medical Technicians Association of Alberta. It had a membership of approximately 370 in 1985. The Registered Emergency Paramedic Association of Alberta whose membership was approximately 300 in 1985 is the professional association for paramedic practitioners.

Drafting of the regulation for emergency medical technicians began in May 1984. The regulation was approved by Order in Council in October 1985 and came into force on December 31, 1985.

Individuals are eligible to be registered if they have satisfactorily completed an approved program of study and attained satisfactory results on the registration examination. Individuals whose formal training took place more than a year prior to application must meet additional study or employment requirements. Registration must be renewed on a yearly basis. Since it is critical that emergency medical technicians maintain competency, there are a number of employment and continuing education requirements before a practitioner's registration may be renewed.

Alberta offers two principal training programs for emergency medical technicians. Training in the ambulance specialty is offered at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT), Calgary and the Alberta Vocational Centre (AVC), Lac La Biche. The SAIT program, an individualized, computer-managed course is 4½ months in length when taken part-time or eight weeks when taken full-time. AVC offers an Emergency Medical Attendant course at various locations in the province. The practicum portion is taken through the

hospital at Lac La Biche. Training in the paramedic specialty is a two year full-time diploma program offered at both SAIT and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT), Edmonton.

Registered practitioners are entitled to use the following titles and initials:

Emergency Medical Technician - E.M.T.
Emergency Medical Technician - Ambulance - E.M.T.-A.
Emergency Medical Technician - Paramedic - E.M.T.-P.

Medical Radiation Technologists

The designation of the discipline of Medical Radiation Technologists received royal assent in June 1983 and a committee was established in January 1984. Members of the Medical Radiation Technologists Committee for 1985 were:

Ian Fleming, *Edmonton,* **Chairman**
Ed Bailey, *Calgary*
Larry Curtis, *Calgary*
Jeffrey Lozon, *Edmonton,* January - August
Gerald Vanhooren, *Red Deer,* Appointed September 1985
Debbie Mallett, *Edmonton,* January - May
Diana Girouard, *Edmonton,* Appointed October 1985
Cam McKay, *Calgary*
Larry Playfair, MD, *Red Deer*

Medical radiation technologists, under the direction of a physician, use a variety of X-ray equipment and radioactive materials to provide diagnostic and therapeutic services to patients.

Practitioners are also referred to as X-ray technologists, radiographers, nuclear medicine technologists, radiotherapy technologists and radiation oncology technologists.

There are three areas of specialization:
A radiographic technologist is responsible for the operation of machines which produce X-rays, together with the use of specialized electronic and accessory equipment using radio-opaque dyes within organs and vessels to produce images of body parts for diagnostic purposes;
A radiation oncology technologist is responsible for the accurate administration of high energy radiation both externally and internally for the treatment of certain forms of cancer;
A nuclear medicine technologist is responsible for utilizing extremely small quantities of radioactive material on the patient or in the laboratory to study various body organs and life functions for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes.

There are approximately 1200 medical radiation technologists in Alberta. Hospitals, physicians' clinics, cancer institutes, and educational institutions, are the major employers of these practitioners.

The professional association for these health professionals is the Alberta Association of Medical Radiation Technologists. In 1985, there were 990 active members excluding student or affiliate members.

Drafting of the regulation for medical radiation technologists began in March 1984. The regulation was approved by Order in Council in October 1985 and will come into effect January 31, 1986.

Individuals are eligible to be registered if they have satisfactorily completed an approved program of study and attained satisfactory results on the registration examination. Individuals whose formal training took place more than two years prior to application must also have been employed as a medical radiation technologist for at least 480 hours in the past five years or must have completed a refresher course to meet the registration requirements. Registrations are renewed on a yearly basis if employment or study requirements are met.

Alberta offers a two year diploma program in Medical X-Ray Technology at NAIT and Nuclear Medicine Technology at SAIT in conjunction with a number of hospital training sites. Radiation oncology technologists are trained through the Tom

Baker Cancer Centre, Calgary and the Cross Cancer Institute, Edmonton. All registered practitioners have written the National Certification Examinations of the Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists.

Registered practitioners are entitled to use the following titles and initials:

Medical Radiation Technologist
Radiographic Technologist - R.T.R.
Radiation Oncology Technologist - R.T.T.
Nuclear Medicine Technologist - R.T.N.M.

The field of medical radiation technology is undergoing tremendous technological change due to the incorporation of computers and advancements in electronics. Technologists practising in this area will experience continuing challenge in their work with other health care professionals.

Respiratory Technologists

The designation of the discipline of Respiratory Technologists received royal assent in June 1983, and a committee was established in December 1983. Members of the Respiratory Technologists Committee for 1985 were:

James Coward, *St. Albert*, **Chairman**
Frank Herbert, MD, *Edmonton*
Marleen Irwin, *Edmonton*
Albert Maiani, *Calgary*
Keith Wilson, *Edmonton*

Respiratory technologists, under the direction of a physician, plan and implement therapeutic and diagnostic procedures for patients with heart and lung disorders. Therapeutic services include cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, mechanical ventilatory support and therapeutic gas administration. Examples of diagnostic services are cardio-pulmonary testing and monitoring and arterial blood gas services.

It is estimated that approximately 400 respiratory technologists provide inpatient therapy to nearly 25,000 Albertans a year and diagnostic services to about 3,500 individuals. Their work, carried out in collaboration with other health care professionals such as physicians and nurses, is almost all done within a hospital setting. All major hospitals maintain a full shift of respiratory therapists at all times.

The Alberta Society of Respiratory Therapists, which was founded in 1971, is the professional association for practitioners. It has a membership of approximately 230.

Drafting the regulation for respiratory technologists commenced in February 1984. The regulation was approved by Order in Council in October 1985, and comes into force on March 31, 1986.

Individuals are eligible to be registered if they have satisfactorily completed an approved program of study and attained satisfactory results on the registration examination. Individuals whose formal training took place more than 18 months prior to application must also have been employed as a respiratory technologist for at least 240 hours or completed an approved refresher course. Registrations are renewed on a yearly basis if employment or study requirements are met.

The approved training program for respiratory technologists is a two year diploma course offered through both NAIT and SAIT. This program has both theoretical and clinical components. Eight Alberta hospitals accept enrolled students for clinical training. These hospitals are the Edmonton General, Royal Alexandra, Misericordia and University of Alberta Hospitals in Edmonton; Foothills, Holy Cross and Calgary General Hospitals in Calgary; and the Red Deer Regional Hospital Centre. Students must successfully complete a national examination set by the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists.

Registered practitioners are entitled to use the following titles and initials:

Registered Respiratory Technologist - R.R.T.
Registered Respiratory Therapist - R.R.T.

HEALTH DISCIPLINES DESIGNATED TO BE REGULATED UNDER THE HEALTH DISCIPLINES ACT

The discipline of respiratory therapy has potential for future growth because of the development of new and improved treatments in clinical therapy and diagnostic equipment. Research and technological advancement in medicine will impact heavily on the specialized discipline of respiratory technology and therapists will be called upon to respond to changing and challenging demands.

Health Disciplines designated to be regulated under the Health Disciplines Act

Acupuncturists

The designation of the discipline of acupuncture received royal assent in November 1983 and a committee was established in September 1984. Members of the Acupuncturists Committee for 1985 were:

Ted Yoshida, *Calgary*, **Chairman**
John McIntyre, MD, *Edmonton*
Luke Wong, *Calgary*

The committee has prepared a draft regulation which has been circulated to concerned groups. It is anticipated that a regulation will be proclaimed in 1986.

Acupuncture may be defined as the stimulation of certain sites on the skin, mucous membranes, or underlying tissues of the human body particularly by the insertion of needles, or the application of heat, pressure or electrical current with a view to improving health.

The regulation of acupuncture under the Health Disciplines Act will enable qualified practitioners to practice acupuncture. Registered practitioners will be required to complete an approved program of study and to attain satisfactory results on the approved registration examination. Currently, training in acupuncture is offered in the United States, Europe and Asia. Quebec is developing a program for acupuncturists which will be the first offered in Canada. The Acupuncture Society of Alberta, the professional association for practitioners holds several continuing education seminars each year.

Not all medical conditions are successfully treated through acupuncture. In Alberta, the regulation may limit the practice to those chronic conditions for which there is evidence that acupuncture has a positive effect.

In Alberta, it is estimated there are 22 practitioners whose practice is devoted solely to acupuncture. In addition, there are some 15 registered physicians who use acupuncture as part of their practice. Each practitioner is likely to provide services to 400 to 500 Albertans each year. To be effective, it may be necessary to repeat treatments over a number of weeks or months.

The Acupuncture Society of Alberta, established in 1980, had 32 members in 1985.

Nursing Assistants

The designation of the discipline of nursing assistants received royal assent in November 1983. A health discipline committee was established in September 1984. Members of the Nursing Assistants Committee for 1985 were:

Patricia Fredrickson, *Edmonton*, **Chairman**
David Chesney, MD, *Ponoka*
Maria Cornelson, *Drayton Valley*
Mary Ferries, *Bluffton*
Peter Langelle, *Wetaskiwin*
Francina Lazarowich, *Vegreville*
Roberta Metheral, *Edmonton*
Wilma Poag, *Calgary*
Paul Wolff, *Edmonton*

The committee has prepared a draft regulation which was circulated to appropriate groups. It is anticipated that a regulation will be proclaimed in 1986. Until that time, the discipline of nursing assistants is regulated under the Nursing Assistants Registration Act.

Nursing assistants are practitioners who

provide various kinds of health care services under supervision to patients in hospitals, nursing homes, institutions or other facilities. Nursing orderlies and nursing aides are also titles commonly used.

In Alberta there are approximately 8,500 registered nursing assistants, the majority of whom are employed in active treatment hospitals.

Currently, there are two approved nursing assistant certificate programs offered in the province. These 10 month courses are given at AVC in Calgary and Edmonton.

The Alberta professional association for these practitioners, the Alberta Association of Registered Nursing Assistants, was established in 1961. It had 4,200 members in 1985.

Rehabilitation Practitioners

The designation of the discipline of rehabilitation practitioners received royal assent in November 1983 and a committee was established in November 1984. Members of the Rehabilitation Practitioners Committee for 1985 were:

Mike Kerchinsky, *Red Deer*, **Chairman**
Jean Bellamy, MD, *Calgary* -January-June
Dick Short, MD, *Edmonton* - Appointed in November 1985
Al Geislinger, *Red Deer*
Doug Hauser, *Calgary*
Adriana LaGrange, *Red Deer*
Larry MacDonald, *Edmonton*
Linda McKay, *Red Deer*
Dwayne Simmons, *Camrose*
Valerie Swann, *Edmonton*

The committee has worked on a draft of the regulation which is expected to be circulated to concerned groups in 1986.

Rehabilitation practitioners provide services to individuals who have physical, mental or developmental handicaps. Their work includes: providing routine health care; teaching basic self-help, vocational, social and recreational skills; monitoring and evaluating rehabilitation progress; assisting in the assessment of a client's competency or needs and counselling clients under special circumstances. Their services are given on a 24 hour basis, often on a one-to-one client/staff ratio.

Rehabilitation practitioners are employed in a variety of community and institutional settings which are established to improve the quality of life for the handicapped. The services are funded by both private agencies and government departments. There are approximately 1200 rehabilitation practitioners employed in Alberta according to a March 1985 government survey of health and social service personnel.

Depending on the employer, a rehabilitation practitioner may also be known as a group home worker, program worker, rehabilitation worker, behavioural counsellor or developmental assistant.

Currently, rehabilitation practitioners are trained in a two year diploma program. Programs are offered at four colleges in the province: Grant MacEwan Community College, Edmonton; Mount Royal College, Calgary; Red Deer College, and Lethbridge Community College. In addition, AVC at Lac La Biche offered the first year of the diploma program in 1985. Students could transfer to one of the other colleges in order to complete their training. The University of Calgary offers three streams of studies: a four year program leading to a nonteaching Bachelor of Education in Rehabilitation Services; a one year after-degree program leading to a diploma in Rehabilitation Studies; and graduate degree programs allowing for specialization in this discipline. The University of Alberta offers graduate degree programs allowing for specialization in working with multiple dependent handicapped individuals.

The professional association for these practitioners is the Alberta Association of Habilitative Practitioners. Established in 1979, it had a membership of 120 in 1985. The organization is considering a change in name to accommodate the designated title of rehabilitation practitioner.

With the emphasis on integration and

HEALTH DISCIPLINES UNDER EVALUATION BY THE HEALTH DISCIPLINES BOARD

community service as an alternative to institutional services, rehabilitation practitioners play an important role in providing rehabilitative services to the citizens of Alberta. This trend is expected to continue.

Combined Laboratory X-Ray Technicians

The designation of the discipline of Combined Laboratory and X-Ray Technicians received royal assent in November 1984 and a committee was established in August 1985. Members of the Combined Laboratory and X-Ray Technicians Committee for 1985 were:

Arlene Fuller, *Camrose*, **Chairman**
Russell Boe, *Devon*
Peter Demulder, *St. Albert*
Audrey Funk, *Redwater*
Leslie Halliwell, *Edson*
Donna Hateley, *Red Deer*
Brenda Leeb, *Ponoka*
Laurie Melnyk, *Forestburg*
Bryan Ward, MD, *Wainwright*

The committee has recently begun the task of drafting the regulation for this health discipline.

Combined laboratory and X-ray technicians are practitioners who perform diagnostic examinations in the areas of medical laboratory, radiology and electrocardiography. These examinations are performed under the direction of a physician in a hospital or medical clinic. Practitioners usually work in medical facilities whose size does not warrant the employment of specialists in each of these areas. In Alberta, there are approximately 300 of these practitioners.

Currently, combined laboratory and X-ray technicians are graduates of a diploma program offered through NAIT. The first 34 weeks of the program are spent in the institution for theoretical instruction. This is followed by a 26 week practicum in a designated rural training hospital.

The professional association for these practitioners is the Alberta Society of Certified Combined Technicians (ASCCT). Incorporated in 1969, the current membership is 190.

Hearing Aid Practitioners

The designation of hearing aid practitioners received royal assent in November 1984. A health discipline committee has not been established.

Practitioners employed in this health discipline test client's hearing capacity and select, fit, dispense and repair hearing aids. Practitioners' services are used in industry for the purpose of determining the need for hearing protection and to provide and fit hearing protective earmolds when conditions warrant their use. Hearing aid practitioners are employed independently in private clinics or offices.

Presently in Alberta, practitioners are being trained through a home-study course offered by the National Hearing Aid Society; a course in Hearing Aid Audiology at Alberta College, Edmonton, and serving a two year internship under a certified hearing aid practitioner.

The professional association for these individuals is the Alberta Hearing Aid Audiologist Association. It had a membership of 75 in 1985.

Following a request from the association and a subsequent evaluation, the Board recommended that the Alberta Hearing Aid Audiologist Association instead of a health discipline committee govern this discipline. The Minister recommended the association submit a proposed regulation for review. The final decision on the Board's recommendation is pending.

Health Disciplines under evaluation by the Health Disciplines Board

In 1985, the Board began or completed evaluations on the following disciplines: Orthomolecular Consultants; Electroencephalograph Technologists; Therapeutic Masseurs; Mental Deficiency Nurses; Dental Technicians and Athletic Therapists. The following synopsis describes

HEALTH DISCIPLINES UNDER EVALUATION BY THE HEALTH DISCIPLINES BOARD

the stage of this work or the recommendation made.

The discipline of orthomolecular consultants was evaluated and the final report completed in 1985. The Board's recommendation to the Minister is to be made early in 1986.

The evaluation of the discipline of electroencephalograph technologists commenced in 1984. At the conclusion of the assessment, the Board decided that interested groups should be contacted again to reconsider the scope of practice and name of the discipline. Although the investigation is now complete, the Board's recommendation has not been made and the final report is expected in 1986.

The Alberta Association of Therapeutic Masseurs requested an evaluation be made of the discipline of therapeutic masseurs. Twelve groups submitted briefs and 10 oral presentations were made concerning designation. In April 1985, the Board submitted its final report and recommendation to the Minister. Because the risk to the public is not high, designation was not recommended. Although the practice of massage for relaxation and the relief of stress may be valuable, it does not involve a degree of risk of harm which warrants regulation under the Health Disciplines Act. Physical therapists or physiotherapists practise massage for the treatment of conditions or disabilities where there is a degree of risk to the public. However, the Physical Therapy Profession Act provides for regulation of these practitioners. The Minister approved the Board's recommendation.

In January 1985, the Mental Deficiency Nurses Association of Alberta requested the Health Disciplines Board evaluate its discipline for regulation under the Health Disciplines Act. Briefs were received by 13 groups, two of whom also gave oral presentations. The Board will present its recommendation and final report to the Minister in 1986.

In February 1985, the Alberta Society of Registered Dental Technicians requested the Health Disciplines Board evaluate its discipline for regulation under the Health Disciplines Act. Fourteen groups submitted written briefs and three made oral presentations. The final report and recommendation will be presented to the Minister in 1986.

In February 1985, the Alberta Athletic Therapists Association requested the Health Disciplines Board evaluate its discipline for regulation under the Health Disciplines Act. The Board has initiated requests for submissions from concerned groups. Oral presentations, followed by the final report and recommendation are scheduled for 1986.

Requests have been received to evaluate the disciplines of Homeopaths and Chiropodists. These assessments will begin in 1986.